CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST 15

JULY 1977

Pres: Mr R. Bradfield
Sec : Mrs R. Mills
Treas: Mr L. Bransgrove

Committee: V.Pres: Mr G. Broadway, Mr G Sitch; Miss J. Chapman, Mr F. Meyer, Mr & Mrs M. Winterbottom, Miss F McIver, Mrs B. Singleton; Mr E. Perkins (News Ed)

Monthly meetings are held on the second Friday of each month at the Castlemaine Education Centre (SEC Building, Mostyn St). Visitors and prospective members are invited to attend the club's sessions.

Orchids of the Castlemaine District No 9 of a series by R. Mills

COMMON BIRD ORCHID.

COMMON BIRD ORCHID

(Chiloglottis gunnii...also called the Large Bird Orchid)

The common name of this orchid alludes to the flower which supposedly resembles the wide open beak of a young bird. The colour is generally green with a maroonish tinge. The broad lip has a stalked gland with two glands on each side, and one near the tip. There is sometimes a row of small glands on each side of the main calli.

The flower which rises from the two broad linear leaves rarely exceeds 6 cm in height, but the fertilised ovary rises to 20 cm or so to aid seed dispersal.

I have seen patches of this orchid in the Metcalfe bush, but I believe that some irresponsible person has taken quite a number of the plants since I was there.

This Month's Motif The grass-tree design is used by many natural history groups. Transfers similar to the above design are obtainable from the treasurer. Cost is 30 ¢ each.

ORCHIDS

SOME OF THEIR FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

by Faye McIver.

Orchid plants seem to have a special attraction for some animals. Various parts of the plant, especially the flowers and the rhizomes are sought out and eaten, in preference to other available plants, by wallabies, wombats and smaller animals. White winged-choughs have been known to dig up and eat rhizomes of an entire colony of greenhoods, leaving the rosette of leaves scattered about. (The rosettes then attempt to send down new roots and develop new rhizomes, sometimes with success.)

The destruction is counterbalanced by a wide range of pollinating agents. In the case o the Flying Duck Orchid (Caleana major, found locally at Glenluce) the duck's head i.e the orchids labellum is sensitive to touch. When a tiny insect (Lophyrotoma leachii) alights on the head, the latter snaps down, trapping the insect and the outcome is pollination. In Greenhoods the same thing happens, the agents being gnats and mosquitoes.

The highly specialised Large Tongue Orchid (Cryptostylis subulata, in this State confined to the south) attracts an ichneumon wasp by its scent and insect-like appearance. This wasp is the sole pollinating agent - where the wasp becomes extinct the orchid becomes extinct.
Some species of Sun Orchid are self pollinating (e.g. Thelymitra pauciflora and T. carnea, both of which occur locally). As they do not require outside assistance they do not always open.

Bees pollinate some orchids, including some Sun Orchids.

A North Queensland orchid grower has quoted some evidence to support his hypothesis that a species of Dendrobium is pollinated by the Yellow honeyeater.

No one knows with certainty how the strangest orchid of all is pollinated, but a tunelling insect has been suggested. This orchid was discovered in Western Australia in 1928 by a farmer when ploughing. It is completely subterraneum, 8-30 cm below the surface, is leafless and rootless and is a saprophyte thought to have affinities with a small paperbark (Melaleuca uncinata). Seeds are developed well below the surface and the orchid stem then grows longer so that the seeds just reach the surface to ensure dispersal. (Another orchid with similar habits has been found in New South Wales and Southern Queensland and yet another in New Zealand. These orchids are sometimes referred to as rare - who could know?)

FOR SALE Local Bird List for Southern Australia Printed on card by the Gould League, it has silhouettes of the common bird types, their names and twelve columns to mark in sightings. Cost is 10 ¢

ORCHID BOOKS

by Faye McIver

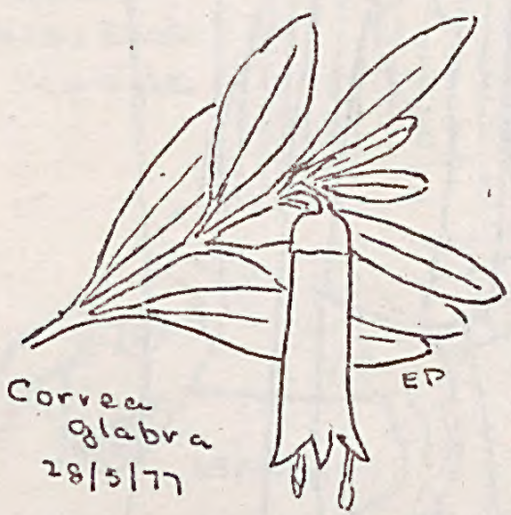
Victorian Native Orchids (2 volumes) by C.E. Gray (Publ. Longman 1966, 1971) includes every Victorian recorded species- one orchid per page, with description, habitat, flowering period, plate (mainly coloured); recommended for the new enthusiast.

Orchids of Australia by W.H. Nicholls, edited by D.L. Jones and T.B. Muir (Publ Nelson, 1969) 476 full page coloured plates (hand painted), 129 pages describing species; very technical but necessary for accurate identification of many species.

Australian Native Orchids in Colour by Leo Cady and E.R. Rotherham (Publ A.H. and A.W. Reed, 1970). 100 excellent colour plates and 108 pages describing species and giving general information on the habits of orchids. Less technical than Nicholls.

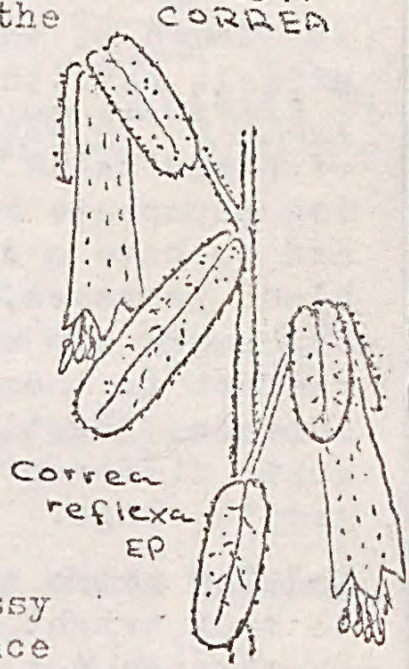
Australian Ground Orchids by Densey Clyne (Periwinkle Colour S Series, 1970). An introduction to our terrestrial orchids, with labelled diagrams showing the structure of some of the better k known orchids, also some excellent colour plates and some hints on photographing orchids.

Plants of the Castlemaine District Number 10 of a series.



LOCAL CORREAS

Rock Correa (Correa glabra) is scattered through the Castlemaine district. It occurs in the Barfold Gorge, on the rocks near the Cairn Curran wall, in the Muckleford Gorge, and fairly prolifically on the Nuggety Range near Maldon.



Like the local variety of the Common Correa (Correa reflexa), it has green bell-like flowers. The upper surface of the leaves of Rock Correa are smooth and a dark glossy green compared with the lighter, bristly upper surface of the much more widespread ommon orrea. Rock Correa too, grows to a larger, bushier shrub, and I have only seen it among rocks. It seems to grow best when among big boulders.

The Common Correa however, is found in the local box/stringybark forests, particularly in the Ridge Road areas, and is usually a small open shrub.

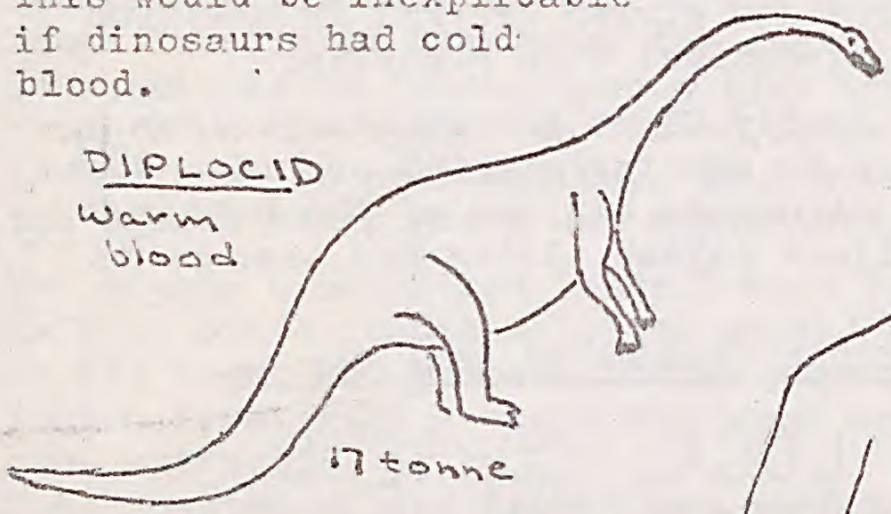
Both correas are excellent garden plants, and are favorite plants of the honey-eaters.

THE NOT SO EXTINCT DINOSAURS

The dinosaurs, like the dodo, have long been regarded as extinct. Not so, according to recent research. Dinosaurs were actually highly successful warm blooded animals and the birds were their direct descendants.

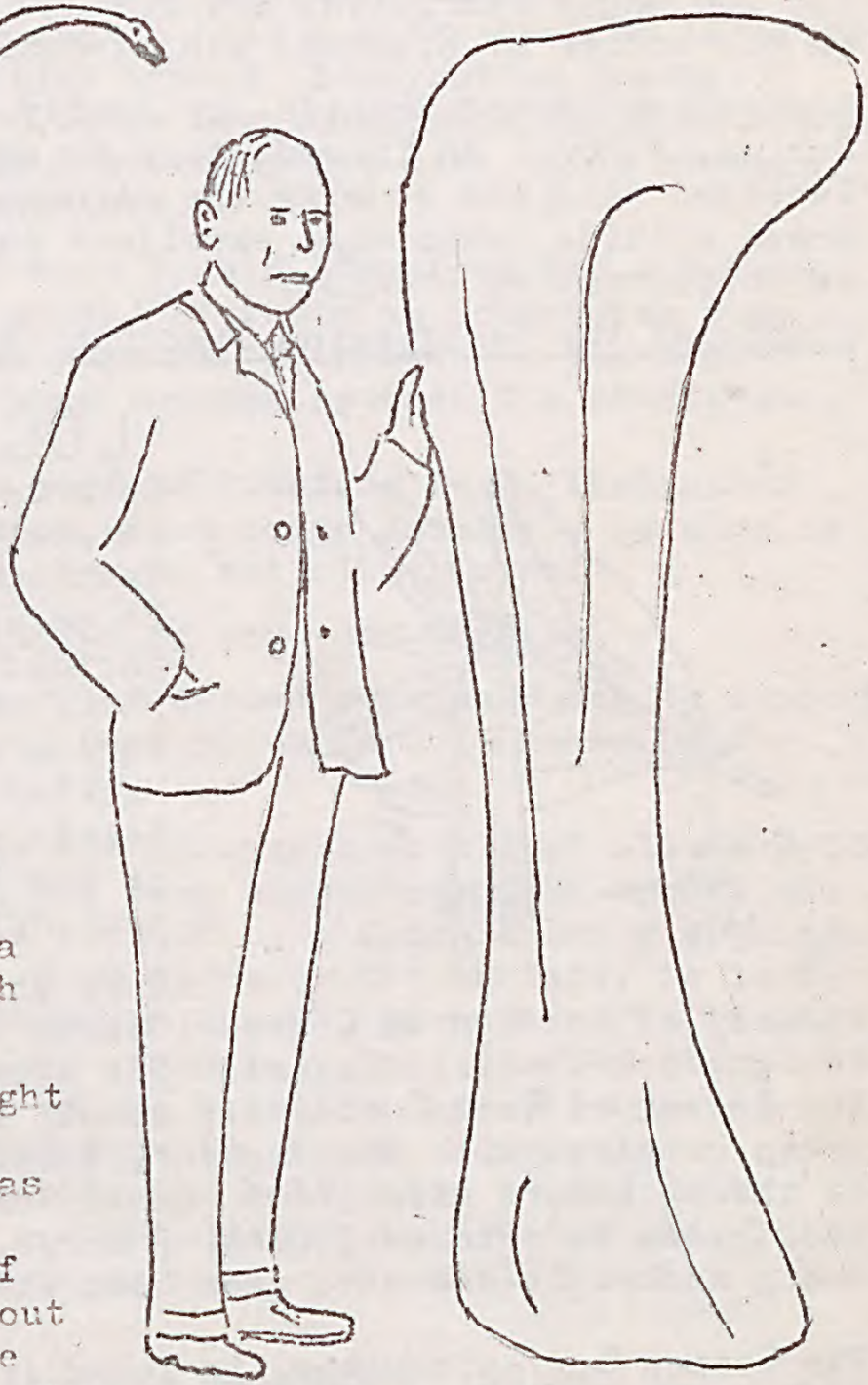
There are several reasons for believing that the dinosaurs were not reptiles at all but warm blooded

(a) Large reptiles cannot live in cold climates (e.g crocodiles are never found far from the tropics), and a study of ancient climates shows that many of the dinosaurs lived in cold regions. This would be inexplicable if dinosaurs had cold blood.



(b) Bones of warm blooded animals have an important function in the formation of blood cells and maintaining phosphate and calcium, and so have a network of blood passages. The bones of dinosaurs are similar in this respect to those of birds and mammals. Reptile bones have a quite different structure with growth rings.

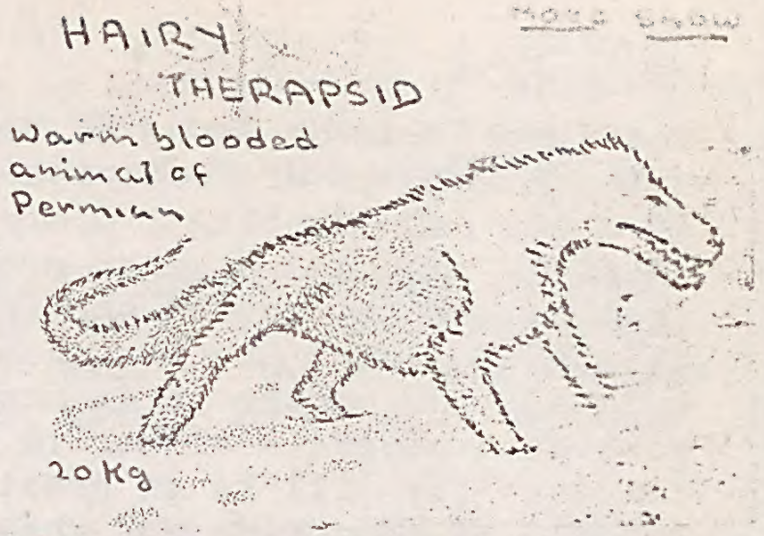
(c) The ratio of predator weight to prey weight depends on whether or not the predator has warm blood. For cold blooded predators, the total weight of the predator population is about 40% of the total weight of the prey population
For warm blooded predators, this ratio is under 5%.



Thigh Bone of Atlantosaurus
(A warm-blooded animal)

Where ratios for dinosaurs can be determined, the ratio indicates warm blood.

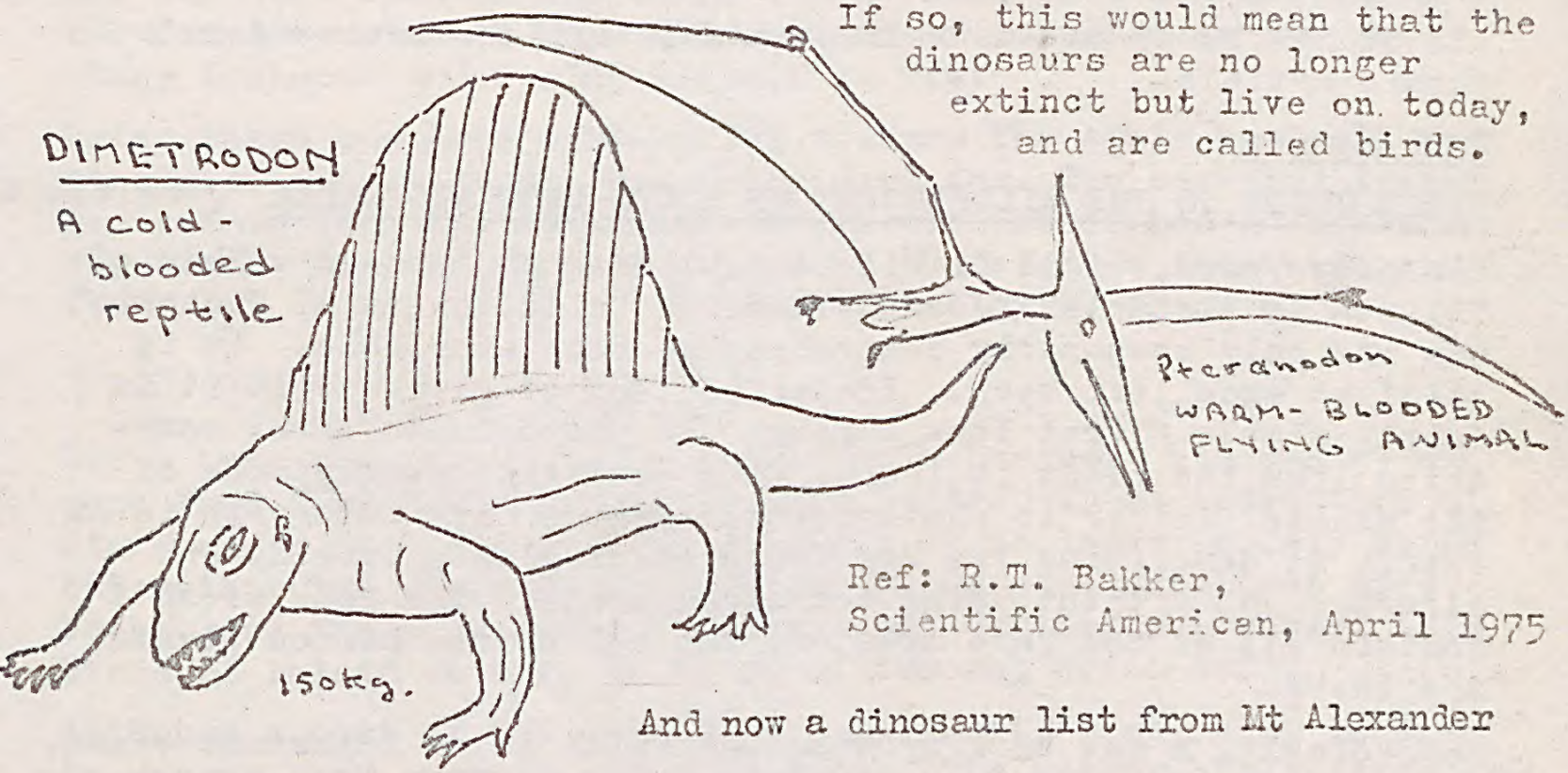
(d) Insulation is usual for warm blooded animals. Mostly, fur or feathers have not been fossilised. However, bird-like dinosaurs had feathers long before they could fly. Dinosaurs have traditionally been drawn with lizard-like skins; this may well be incorrect.



(e)Large reptiles would be less able to move rapidly and have shorter legs than the dinosaurs and mammals. Large, long legs would be an indication of warm blood.

It has been proposed that dinosaurs be reclassified with the birds, or perhaps better, regroup the birds with the dinosaurs.

If so, this would mean that the dinosaurs are no longer extinct but live on today, and are called birds.



Ref: R.T. Bakker, Scientific American, April 1975

And now a dinosaur list from Mt Alexander

MT ALEXANDER BIRD LIST

by Jamie Broadway.

11/6/77

Ibis (near Faraday)
Yellow Faced Honeyeater
Thornbill
White-throated tree-creeper
Crimson Rosella
Striated Grass-wren
White-eared Honeyeater
Scarlet Robin
Blue Wren
Gold-finch
Spotted pardalote
White Cockatoo
Plover (masked?)
Galah
Buff-tailed Thornbill

MAMMAL SURVEY

by Harold Parnaby

The Mammal Survey Group of Victoria is concerned with assimilating knowledge of Victorian Mammals by conducting mammal surveys. At their June meeting I learnt that as a result of ten years of field work and a years preparation they will publish a book in the next few months showing the detailed distribution of our Victorian mammal species. For this they have divided the state into a 10 kilometre grid. Such distribution data has not been published before - either in a book or a technical journal and consequently will be of great value to naturalists.
Details of the price and where to get the book will become available when it is published.

What's the use of knowing an animals distribution if you don't know what it looks like? This is a problem because there are not many books on Australian mammals and it isn't easy to identify a species solely by the use of these books.

All of the books on Australian mammals will be reviewed in a future article.

Book Review

"FIELD GUIDE TO THE WILDFLOWERS OF SOUTH-EAST AUSTRALIA" J Galbraith

For many years, until Dr Willis published the second volume of "Plants in Victoria", Jean Galbraiths "Wildflowers of Victoria" was the only reasonably comprehensive book available. It is still an excellent book. Identification of plants with it is fairly simple -first look through the photographs until something like the plant is found, then read the descriptions of the plants similar to photographed plant. Miss Galbraith is an expert at describing the key features of plants briefly and clearly, and without using technical words. The book doesn't contain all of the rare species, but all of the common plants are there.

Accordingly, a new book by Miss Galbraith is an important event. It is similar in many ways to the old one. This time however, the photos are in colour and are more numerous, and again they direct the user to the appropriate text. This time, the book also covers non-Victorian plants. This makes the book less useful in Victoria; I would have preferred that the extra coverage had been used to to include the rarer Victorian plants.
Distinguishing keys are less used in the new book. No doubt the additional photographs replace these.

Published by Collins, the price is about $15.

"Field Guide to the Wildfowers of South-east Australia" is a valuable additional book for those interested in naming plants.

E.V.

LEGEND OF THE WARATAH

Long ago in the dreamtime there was an aboriginal girl called Krubi Krubi. She made herself a cloak from the red skins of the rock wallaby and trimmed it with red feathers from the crests of the gang-gang cockatoos.

She loved a young aboriginal hunter. He was far enough removed in in blood relationship for them to marry. She would watch for his return from hunting from a cleft between two sandstone rocks on the top of a ridge. The young man always looked for her cloak as he returned.

But one day another tribe trespassed on the Burragorang territory and the young men went off to fight them. Krubi stood at the sandstone cleft watching and waiting. She heard the cries of battle and she saw the men come back, but her lover was not among them. Krubi stayed for seven days waiting and her tears watered the ground so that seeds of wildflowers began to sprout. The she went back to the camp. It was abandoned and the ashes of the fires were seven days cold. So Krubi returned to her sand stone look-out and willed herself to die.

Later there appeared a beautiful flower. The stalk was tall and straight, just like the man Krubi died for. The serrated leaves had points like his spear and the flower was as red as Krubi's red cloak. The aboriginals called it "Waratah"-a tree with red flowers.

Contributed by J. Chapman.

THE GOULD LEAGUE

Times have changed and so has the Gould League. Its change of name from "The Gould League of Bird Lovers" is an indication of its changed outlook, for its main aim is no longer solely birds but rather the environment. It publishes some excellent bird books, and these consider birds as part of the environment (e.g birds of inland waters, or birds of coastal areas etc).

Although a part of the Education Department, membership is open to anyone, and members get good value. The membership application form enclosed with this newsletter gives the membership entitlements.

Other items are available for purchase. Two of them (Bird lists and specimen boxes) are described elsewhere in this issue. The magazine "Survival" is published 3 times a year. Some copies of this are in our club library. Other items available are wall charts (50 ¢), badges (75 ¢), Note cards (10 ¢ with envelope) Habitat stickers (10 ¢) . Magnifying glasses, binoculars, butterfly nets etc are also available.

CLUB PROGRAM

July Meeting Friday July 8
Speaker: Mr E. Wilkinson
Subject: Geological Features of the Loddon-Campaspe Region in need of conservation.

August Meeting Friday Aug 12
Speaker: Mr E. Whitbourn
Subject: Victorian Birds and their habitats.

CAMERA CLUB PROGRAM

Club members are invited
Speaker: Mr A. Hartup
Subject: Problems of Nature Photography.
Place: Education Centre
Date: Tues July 19, 8 p.m.

NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE

Treasurer Credit $61.50, A/c May bulletin $4.50.

The cost of printing the "Castlemaine Naturalist" has risen by 100%.

Loddon-Campaspe Survey The report by the committee has been completed. A copy will be placed in the club library. There are spare forms available to members who may wish to add to the report.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Half subscriptions apply from July 1st. The reduced subs are
Family: $2.50
Single: $1.50
Student/Junior 50 ¢

EXCURSIONS

Sunday July 10 Mt Tarrengower
Leave Ed Centre at 1.00 or meet at the Shire Hall, Maldon at 1.30 p.m.

Saturday Aug 13 Taradale, along the Old Metcalfe Road. Leader is Mrs Mills. Leave Ed Centre at 1.30 p.m.

Sunday Aug 28 Whipstick. All day excursion. Leave Ed. Centre at 10.30 a.m.

Late Sept: To be arranged.

Sat Sept 24 Ocean Grove Sanctuary
Leave Ed Centre at 8 a.m. Leader is Mr Bransgrove.

Oct 8-9 Grampians camp out
See Mr Sitch for details.

October Rheola bus trip.

Sun Nov 6 Mt Beckworth, joint excursion with Creswick F.N.C.

CLIFF BEAUGLEHOLE FUND

Details were given in last month's news sheet. At this meeting there will be a sheet available where members may record their offer of a donation.

Next Committee Meeting July 28

Additions to the Club Library

Ecos, May 1977 This is a magazine produced by CSIRO
Horsham Field Naturalists Club
This is Volume 1, Number 1.

ADVERTISEMENTS

For Sale 5 cm (2 in) clear plastic cubes, with magnifying tops. Ideal for storing specimens. 30 ¢ each. A few will be available at the next meeting.

Found In Kalimna Park, a Sharp Midge Orchid (Prasophyllum despectans), by Mr Broadway. This is a new record for Kalimna.